

Remarks/Arguments

Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's comments in the May 19, 2005 Office Action about the disclosures of the Harvey and Ellis patents in relation to the claimed subject matter. To this end, the Harvey reference generally discloses that a user may interact with a central controller module 115. However, this general description does not disclose the type of interaction associated with an evolving story line provided by the claimed invention. Furthermore, the Ellis reference describes a television set top box that displays an electronic television program guide onto the user's television. Again, this does not disclose the type of interaction involved with an evolving story line of the claimed invention.

Accordingly, Applicant reserves the right to pursue the previously submitted claims or similar claims at a later time. To move this application towards allowance, however, the claims have been amended as discussed below. Dependent claims 14 and 29 have been cancelled.

The claims have been amended to indicate that the system manager contains information about at least one virtual character in the evolving story line, that the message sent by the system manager is from a virtual character in the evolving story line and that the participant responds to the message from the virtual character.

As such, the claimed invention reflects how a participant interacts with characters in an evolving story line instead of simply interacting with a computer as described in Harvey. The Harvey reference does not at all disclose or suggest messages being sent from a virtual character in the evolving story line. To this end, the Harvey reference does not at all describe its central controller module 115 containing information about

virtual characters and the exchange of a message and response between the character and a participant.

To the extent that the Examiner believes his rejection of former claim 14 in the May 19, 2005 final Office Action is relevant, that rejection was as follows:

Harvey teaches about a system ... wherein the message provided by the system manager is a message from another character in the story line (Col 26, lines 5-15).

The portion of the Harvey reference cited by the Examiner is as follows:

Once the execution procedures have been completed, the users may participate in coordinated game play at step 440 under the control of central controller module 115. It is also possible that other users may also have been located in the chat room and selected for inclusion in the multiple player game. Once play is completed at step 445, post application processing activities may proceed at step 450. Post application processing may include, for example, awarding of prizes or tickets and/or gathering of additional information. These activities are discussed in further detail below.

This passage does not support the rejection of current claims (nor the rejection of former claim 14 for that matter). This passage relates only to multiple users interacting with the central controller module 115. This passage states nothing about "another character in the story line" as the Examiner contends, let alone a virtual character contained in a system manager as set forth in claimed invention. That a second or other user may interact with the central controller module 115 in Harvey does not at all disclose or suggest that that other user is a character in a story line, let alone the virtual character of the claimed invention. This passage also states nothing about a message and response between a virtual character and participant.

Applicant notes that the Examiner similarly rejected former claim 29 on the same passage from the Harvey reference. (Office Action, p. 9.) In that rejection, however, the

Examiner stated that Harvey taught a message "wherein the message is a message from another character (another player) in the story line." Id. But as noted above, Harvey does not disclose that another user interacting with the central controller module 115 is a character in a story line, let alone a virtual character contained in the system manager of the claimed invention.

Like the Harvey reference, the Ellis reference also does not disclose or suggest the claimed invention.

Conclusion

For all the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that the pending claims are in allowable form. Should the Examiner disagree, the undersigned requests to arrange a telephone interview to discuss the foregoing and/or arrange for a demonstration of the claimed invention to the Examiner.

Respectfully submitted,

JONES DAY

By 

Theodore S. Maceiko
Reg. No. 35,593

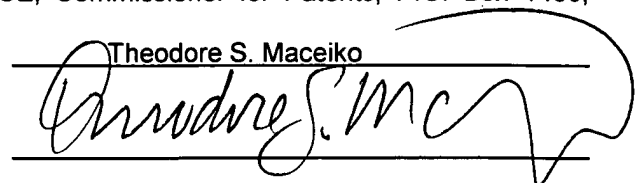
Dated: January 19, 2006

555 South Flower Street
50th Floor
Los Angeles, California 90071
(213) 489-3939

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Theodore S. Maceiko